531. [*Transferred to 16th December 1993.*]

Closure of non-viable branches of Nationalised Banks

532. SHRI DEBABRATA BISWAS: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have since decided to close down the non-viable branches of the Nationalised banks; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED) (a) and (b) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have reported that bank branches which have been chronically incurring losses and are unlikely to improve their financial position despite all efforts, are to be converted either into 'recovery' branches or closed down. The number of such branches will be around 100.

Visit of Represenatives of International credit rating organisation

533. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state

(a) whether representatives of various international credit rating organisations visited New Delhi during September this year; if so, details of the representatives alongwith their organisations who visited New Delhi; and

(b) what are the details of the assessments made by them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED) (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Increased in the cost of living

534. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the trend of inflation has been rising abnormally high in the recent past;

(b) whether the rising trend has increased the cost of living;

(c) whether Government have been failing to check it; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED) (a) There has been a moderate rise inflation in recent weeks to 8.5 per cent rate which cannot be regarded as abnormal when compared to 16.3 per cent inflation rate in September 1991.

(b) Rise in inflation does cause the cost of living to rise as the same level of income can buy less goods and services;

(c) and (d) As a result of disinflationary policies of the government it was possible to bring down the inflation rate to 7 per cent by March 1993. Since August, 1993, there has been an inflationary undercurrent because of a number of reasons. These include; higher issue prices for public distribution system, higher minimum support price to farm producers for wheat, rice and sugarcane, prolonged dry spell in August causing apprehensions of short-fall in agricultural output in A.P. Gujarat and U.P., truckers' strike, and relaxation in the fiscal discipline.

Setting up New High Power TV Tranmitters

535. SHRIMATI CHANDRIKA ABHINANDAN JAIN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND